

# Glossary

## General Terms

**ACE (American Cinema Editors):** an honorary society of motion picture editors, who come together on the basis of their professional achievements, their dedication to the education of others, and their commitment to the craft of editing

**ASC (American Society of Cinematographers):** an organization where cinematographers meet with fellow professionals and discuss their craft.

**Antagonist:** a character who tries to prevent the protagonist from reaching a particular goal.

**Cast:** the actors in a film

**Continuity:** the art of maintaining consistency from shot-to-shot and scene-to-scene, even when the scenes are shot out of sequence

**Crew:** the technical people working on a movie

**Dailies/Rushes:** film shot during one day of shooting

**Deciphering:** unscrambling or de-coding to understand the meaning

**Hook:** an enticing beginning of a movie that sets the tone

**Lighting:** an important means of expression in film, lighting refers to the method of illuminating a shot

**Lyricists:** people who write the words (the lyrics) to songs

**Plot:** the major event of the story

**Props:** abbreviation for “properties”— objects in a scene that decorate the set, or objects that an actor uses (e.g. a pen, a painting on the wall, a bouquet of flowers, a couch)

**Protagonist:** the main character of the story or film

**Scene:** 1. One or more shots taken at the same time and place. 2. Part of the story that happens in one place, during one period of time. Sometimes, a single shot can make up an entire scene.

**Sequence:** number of scenes taken together

**Set:** the place, created or pre-existing, where a scene is shot

**Set up:** each time the camera position is changed

**Shot:** the smallest unit of film— taken in one uninterrupted process of the camera.

**Storyboard:** a shot-by-shot layout drawn before shooting or editing the scene

**Viewfinder:** it’s the part of the film camera that you will look through. It shows what the camera will record on film.

## Camera Composition

**Close-up (CU):** a very close shot of something — usually a person’s face or some other object. This shot really captures emotion.

**Composition:** the positioning of people and objects in the frame

**Establishing shot:** a wide shot that shows the audience a lot about the setting

**Extreme close-up (XCU):** Like it sounds, it’s a really close shot. It may be someone’s lips, or a person’s eye with a reflection in it.

**Extreme long shot:** taken from a great distance (or it looks as though it is taken from a great distance). It is often used to give the audience perspective — a sense of how later scenes will fit into the whole environment.

**Medium close-up:** an example would be a shot of a person from the waist up

**Long shot:** taken from a longer distance, it gives slightly more details than the extreme

long shot, and is sometimes referred to as the establishing shot. It shows the audience a lot about the setting.

**Object:** things in a shot that are not people (e.g. a tree, a car, a building)

**Subject:** a person in a shot

## Camera Angles

**Cutaway:** an abrupt cut away from the scene to something else or to a new scene. In old movies, there might be a hero who falls over a cliff and was hanging onto a rock. Then there would be a cutaway to an owl in a tree. Then a shot back to the hero — who was by then standing on the ground.

**Eye-level angle shot:** Shot at eye level. These shots give a real sense of someone’s point of view.

**High-angle shot:** You need to be higher than your subject to shoot this way, either looking down at something on the floor, or, you could get up on a table or chair and shoot down. It is used to give the viewer a sense of superiority

to the subject, and to give a sense of the subject being vulnerable, small.

**Low-angle shot:** a shot in which the subject is above the camera. It usually conveys a sense of the subject’s importance, looming above us.

**Oblique-angle shot:** effective in showing scenes of violence and confusion or being drunk or drugged— usually from the point of view of the person.

## Camera Movement

**Pan:** moving the camera from side to side, as if you are following someone who is walking from left to right

**Tilt:** moving the camera up and down, as if you are following someone jumping on a trampoline

**Zoom:** moving in on an object from a wider shot to a closer one

## Lighting Terms

**Base light:** the existing amount of light in a room

**High contrast:** when the tones of color, or black and white, are more extreme

**Illumination:** the amount and quality of light on a subject (example: a candle would provide a very small amount of light to illuminate a subject)

**Lamp:** a special light used for photography or cinematography

## Editing Terms

**Assemble edit:** Used to copy an entire video, or pieces of a video, onto a new master video tape (one which does not already have a recorded signal or control track (black)). This process records the video and audio together (which cannot be divided) and combines them on to another tape. This is often used to make complete copies of programs.

**Coverage:** a shot used by the editor to break up the action

**Dissolve:** when the end of one shot fades into the next one— not turning to black, but blurring slightly and then clearing up for the next shot

**Edit:** to assemble a film by cutting and repositioning the shots

**Fade:** when the end of a shot darkens into a black screen— and then fades up, or lightens, into the next scene.

**Final cut:** the final, edited film

**Insert edit:** This process allows you to edit audio and video, separately or together, onto a master tape with control track (black). This process requires a master tape with control track.

**Montage:** A French word meaning “to assemble,” a montage is achieved by editing many images rapidly together. A sequence of shots, usually without much dialogue.

**Pick-up shot/scene:** a shot that is added after the editing phase

**Reaction shot:** a shot used by editors to draw more interest in a scene. For example, a close-up of a person listening during a conversation

**Real time:** a shot or scene filmed in actual time, not compressed

**Simple cut:** when the end of one shot is directly butted onto the beginning of the next without any noticeable special effect

**Sound glitch:** unwanted sound on the film footage that was unintentionally recorded

**Superimposition:** when two images are shown, one on top of the other. Usually, one image faded away, leaving just one image. Usually this is done quickly, but long enough for the viewer to link the two objects in her or his mind.

## Sound Terms

**Ambient sound:** background sounds like a clock ticking, a fluorescent light humming, traffic, wind, etc.

**Audio:** any kind of sound in a film or video

**Dialogue:** a conversation spoken between actors or one actor speaking to himself/herself— it's the actor's spoken words

**Music:** It conveys a mood and sometimes it helps the audience understand what is happening, or what is about to happen.

**Narration:** the off-screen voice of the observer-commentator. It can be a character in the film or it can be someone we never see.

**Score:** adding music to the movie to help promote the director's vision

**SFX/Sound effects:** sounds created to mimic objects or subjects in a film, like the sound of a girl walking in snow, a dog barking, an alien spaceship engine, etc.

**Unidirectional microphone:** collects sound from mainly one direction. Can be pointed at an actor to better hear dialogue and reduce ambient noise.

**Voice over, or monologue:** 1. Often used when the actor's thoughts are said aloud (but the image is not of the actor's lips moving) and/or when the invisible narrator speaks. 2. a long speech

**Windscreens:** devices like a special foam sock that are placed on a microphone to reduce ambient wind noise

# Directors Guild of America

The Directors Guild of America (DGA) was founded in 1936 to protect the rights of directors. To the filmmakers who gave birth to the Guild, the issues are clear: the establishment and protection of economic and creative rights for directors and recognition of the director's contribution to the art of moving pictures.

Today, the DGA represents more than 12,700 members (Directors, Assistant Directors, Unit Production Managers, Associate Directors, Stage Managers, Technical Coordinators) working in theatrical, industrial, educational and documentary films, as well as in television (live, filmed and taped), videos, commercials, interactive media and internet projects in the US and throughout the world.

For more information, please visit [www.dga.com](http://www.dga.com)



# The Film Foundation

The Film Foundation was established in 1990 by Martin Scorsese and seven other eminent directors—Woody Allen, Francis Ford Coppola, Stanley Kubrick, George Lucas, Sydney Pollack, Robert Redford and Steven Spielberg—who were joined shortly thereafter by directors Robert Altman and Clint Eastwood. The Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to helping protect and preserve motion picture history.

Through direct funding to the nation's leading archives, the Foundation works to preserve a broad range of films including classic Hollywood productions, avant-garde works, documentaries, newsreels, and silent films from the early days of cinema. The Foundation also creates educational programs, national campaigns and public events to foster greater awareness for film protection and preservation.

In 2002, the Foundation consolidated with the Artists Rights Foundation of the Directors Guild of America. With this consolidation, the President and Secretary-Treasurer of the DGA became members of the Board of Directors.

For more information, please visit [www.film-foundation.org](http://www.film-foundation.org)



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## Guilds, Organizations, Foundations

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American Society of Cinematographers  
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